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THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 15 December 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Enclosed is a copy of the "Appeal for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina" issued by the Conference of the Religious Leaders of Former Yugoslavia, coordinated by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, at a meeting held in Switzerland from 24 to 26 November 1992 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 143, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Edward J. PERKINS

ANNEX

Appeal for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, issued by the Conference of the Religious Leaders of Former Yugoslavia, held in Switzerland from 24 to 26 November 1992

Here in a country of peace, freedom and well-being, at the initiative and under the auspices of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and thanks to the hospitality of the Swiss Government having received messages of solidarity and support from the President of Swiss Confederation Mr. Rene' Felber, from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, the Co-President of the Geneva Conference on Former Yugoslavia, Mr. Cyrus Vance, the special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and Mr. Douglas Hurd, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, we have met in common faith in God, the Creator and Benefactor of all people and all nations.

In our common hope in God's love and aid, we express the deepest concern for the further fate of our congregations and of all our people, tragically involved in the most brutal and inhuman war in their sad history.

In the name of our spiritual and moral responsibility, in the name of the Islamic Community, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Croatian Roman Catholic Church, but above all in the name of God's justice and love, in the name of dignity of both, the human being and the human community - taught by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians on the basis of the holy Bible, by Moslems on the basis of the Koran - we unanimously and in total unison, launch this appeal for peace, this cry to God and to men, this cry of suffering and hope from the bottom of our souls. We are addressing this appeal in the first place to all the faithful in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics and Moslems, and to all political leaders and all our unfortunate people, Serbs, Croats and Moslems.

The evil has surpassed all bounds and the suffering is indescribable. That is why we do not beg or implore, but in God's name and justice, in the name of humanity and survival of everyone, we demand the immediate, unconditional and irrevocable end of the war, the re-establishment of peace and the renewal of dialogue, as the only method of solving existing national and political problems.

We address ourselves to all international organizations, to the whole international community, to all countries and all people of goodwill with the request to use all their influence and all morally justifiable means in order to make further appeals like this one unnecessary.

Our demand for ending the war and building peace has a global character and here we mention only its most important and urgent concrete dimensions:

1. All fighting and bloodshed must stop immediately and negotiations must begin at once in order to arrive at just solutions.

2. Humanitarian assistance must be guaranteed and we pledge to justly distribute to all victims such assistance, to be channeled through religious communities and humanitarian organizations, regardless of faith or persuasion.

3. All war prisoners, civil detainees and hostages must be freed immediately and unconditionally and all prisoner camps and illegal prisons must be closed.

4. An immediate end must be put to the inhuman practice of ethnic cleansing.

5. We demand that all refugees and displaced persons must be helped to return to their native cities and villages - meanwhile and until conditions for their return become possible - all governments are asked provisionally to receive the refugees. Those who remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina must e able to live in protected and secure areas.

6. The destruction of homes and material goods and those edifices belonging to the cultural heritage of the afflicted region must end now, as well as the blasphemous and senseless destruction of holy places of worship and other sacred sites.

7. All religious personalities and employees of religious organizations must be freed from illegal detention and all persecuted clerics and religious employees must be permitted to contact their flocks and freely perform their religious duties.

8. We emphatically state that this is not a religious war, and that the characterization of this tragic conflict as a religious war and the misuse of all religious symbols used with the aim to further hatred, must be proscribed and is condemned.

Only if we all address ourselves to God and if we serve him with all our energy, can we be good neighbours and friends to each other, and even more than that - brothers.

We call all our congregations to common prayer on December 23, 1992, to demonstrate our complete solidarity with all individuals and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as all other afflicted people in former Yugoslavia.

A standing Committee "Conscience in Action" has been established and authorized to meet on short notice in order to monitor all the activities mentioned above, to call for strong action whenever necessary and to make recommendations to the signatories of this document.

We unanimously and with the greatest indignation condemn all crimes committed in this war and we distance ourselves from all those who commit such crimes, regardless of their nationality and religion.

We declare emphatically and with all our vigor:

> Crime in the name of religion is the greatest crime against religion.
>
> All torture and massacres provoke horror and shame, but nothing provokes it more than the criminal and inhuman treatment of women and young girls and even children, and we condemn such horrors.
>
> We propose the alternative to hatred, destruction, pogroms and inhumanity, an alternative worthy of men and of our faith in God: it is peace, justice, the dignity of the human being, tolerance and reconciliation - in one word - love for mankind for all time and eternity.